

Message Text

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SUBJECT: UTILIZATION OF U.S. ATLANTIC HERRING CATCH QUOTA
BY WEST GERMAN FISHERMEN

1. DR. KARL-HEINZ FEILHAUER, PRESIDENT OF GERMAN DEEPSEA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION OF BREMERHAVEN, APPROACHED US TODAY TO EXPLAIN PREDICAMENT OF HIS INDUSTRY IN UTILIZING 1977 CATCH QUOTA OF 4,835 METRIC TONS OF ATLANTIC HERRING ALLOCATED BY USG TO FRG AND TO REQUEST OUR ASSISTANCE IN EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES OF REMEDIAL ACTION.

2. ACCORDING TO DR. FEILHAUER, FIVE OF THE SIX WEST GERMAN VESSELS LICENSED TO UTILIZE CATCH QUOTA IN "WINDOW" AREA ON GEORGES BANK OFF NEW ENGLAND FROM AUGUST 15 UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30 WERE UNABLE TO CATCH ANY HERRING DURING FIRST TEN DAYS OF CATCH PERIOD. THEREUPON, SIXTH VESSEL WAS NOT SENT TO WINDOW AREA. DR. FEILHAUER STATES THAT FAILURE TO CATCH ANY HERRING WAS WITNESSED BY US FISHERIES INSPECTORS ABOARD GERMAN VESSELS. FOR ECONOMIC REASONS, VESSELS OPERATING IN WINDOW AREA WERE REDIRECTED TO CANADIAN WATERS TO CATCH SQUID UNDER EMERGENCY QUOTA ALLOCATION GRANTED BY CANADIAN GOVERNMENT. GERMAN FISHERY SUPPORT VESSEL "FRITHJOF" REMAINED IN WINDOW AREA TO EXPLORE HERRING

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CATCHING POSSIBILITIES, BUT ACCORDING TO LATEST "FRITHJOF" REPORT OF SEPTEMBER 9 NO COMMERCIALY EXPLOITABLE STOCKS HAD BEEN DETECTED. GERMAN FISHERMEN BELIEVE THAT HIGHER-THAN-NORMAL WATER TEMPERATURES PREVENTED HERRING MOVING INTO ALLOCATED WINDOW AREA THIS YEAR. THEY HAVE INFORMATION THAT ATLANTIC HERRING IS NOW MOSTLY CONCENTRATED IN WATERS ABOUT 100 MILES NORTHEAST OF WINDOW AREA, PRIMARILY IN ICNAF ZONE 5Y,

BUT ALSO 5Z.

3. WITH UTILIZATION OF CANADIAN SQUID CATCH QUOTA NEARING COMPLETION, GERMAN TRAWLER OPERATORS ARE NOW FACED WITH DILEMMA OF SENDING SIX VESSELS BACK TO WINDOW AREA ON GEORGES BANK AT OPERATING COSTS OF ABOUT \$10,000 PER VESSEL PER DAY WITH VERY LITTLE PROSPECT OF CATCHING ANY WORTHWHILE QUANTITIES OF HERRING DURING THE REMAINING CATCH PERIOD, OR CALLING THEIR SHIPS BACK TO HOMEPORTS (A NINE-DAY TRIP AT NEARLY THE SAME COST AS INDICATED ABOVE) AND FOREGOING UTILIZATION OF US ATLANTIC HERRING CATCH QUOTA WHICH WOULD SERIOUSLY AGGRAVATE CURRENT HERRING SHORTAGE IN WEST GERMAN MARKET.

4. WHILE DR. FEILHAUER REALIZES THAT FORMAL REQUEST FOR ANY CHANGE IN CONDITIONS FOR UTILIZATION OF US CATCH QUOTA FOR ATLANTIC HERRING WOULD HAVE TO BE PRESENTED BY COMMISSION OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, HE REQUESTED OUR ASSISTANCE IN EXPLORING THE FOLLOWING POSSIBILITIES OF REMEDIAL ACTION:

(A) EXTENSION OF PRESENT CATCH AREA TO ICNAF ZONES 5Y AND 5Z;

(B) EXTENSION OF CATCH PERIOD BEYOND SEPTEMBER 30. WHILE GERMAN FISHERMEN WOULD WELCOME ADDITIONAL TIME TO UTILIZE HERRING CATCH QUOTA BECAUSE OF MANY DAYS LOST THUS UNCLASSIFIED

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FAR, THEY POINT OUT THAT SPAWNING PERIOD OF HERRING DRAWS TO A CLOSE AROUND END OF SEPTEMBER, AND SPENT HERRING IS OF LESS DESIRABLE QUALITY BECAUSE OF LOWER FAT CONTENTS. FURTHERMORE, BECAUSE OF LOWER UNIT WEIGHT, A HIGHER NUMBER OF HERRING WOULD BE NEEDED TO FILL CATCH QUOTA, WHICH WOULD BE CONTRARY TO CONSERVATION OF HERRING STOCKS DESIRED BY USG.

(C) IMMEDIATE INCREASE IN US SQUID CATCH QUOTA TO TIDE WEST GERMAN TRAWLERS OVER ANY WAITING PERIOD UNTIL DECISION ON CONDITIONS FOR UTILIZATION OF HERRING CATCH QUOTA IS REACHED AND TO MAKE THEIR OPERATIONS ON GEORGES BANK MORE FLEXIBLE. GERMAN FISHING INDUSTRY UNDERSTANDS THAT US FISHERY AUTHORITIES HAVE ALREADY INDICATED THAT SUCH AN INCREASE WOULD BE POSSIBLE.

5. ACTION REQUESTED:

IN VIEW OF URGENCY OF MATTER, WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ASAP DEPARTMENT'S ADVICE ON QUESTIONS POSED BY DR. FEILHAUER. HUNTER

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